



DELTA COUNTY, COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Bonnie H. Koehler
Health Officer

William C. Lemoine
Director

June 17, 2008

John Salazar
225 North 5th Street, STE 702
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Dear Mr. Salazar,

Delta County deeply appreciates the Federal West Nile Virus surveillance money it has received from the Epidemiological and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Infectious Diseases Cooperative Agreement grant program funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) via the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. For the past five years, the Department has used the money to support disease surveillance efforts in Delta County to assure that informed science-based decisions could be made to control the mosquito population and decrease the risk of exposure to the disease. In 2006, the disease reached epidemic proportions in the County with thirty two cases and one death. We expect the continued presence of the disease in the County each mosquito season from now on.

Unfortunately, federal funding has not kept pace with the continuing outbreak. After relatively steady funding in FY2003-2006, ELC grants for WNV work have dropped dramatically in recent years, with total grants of only \$13,400,000 in FY2008. The President's budget proposes an additional cut of \$7,000,000 for this program for FY2009. This would be more than a 50% cut in real dollars for Delta County, and an even greater challenge when increasing costs are considered.

For Delta County, this means that as our efforts at disease surveillance increase, our funding continues to decline. In FY2006 Delta County received \$16,999, and in FY2007 \$12,000. This year the Department was notified that the West Nile Virus Surveillance funding will be cut again with an expected allocation of \$6000.

We would request that as a member of the Colorado congressional delegation, you pursue additional funds to continue this program in Fiscal Year 2009 to the same level as in FY2006 as the Appropriations Committees have repeatedly requested. Without at least level funding from 2006, this Department will be forced to curtail our local surveillance program, and many more Delta County residents will be at risk. We thank you for your consideration on this essential program.

Sincerely,
Delta County Board of Health

Wayne Wolf, Chair

Wayne Wolf

Olen Lund

Olen Lund

CC: CDC; CDPH&E

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